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## **ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY BOWLES ANNOUNCES DRAFT GREAT MARSH COASTAL WETLANDS RESTORATION PLAN**

BOSTON - Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles today unveiled the Draft Great Marsh Coastal Wetlands Restoration Plan, a blueprint that identifies more than 100 potential salt marsh restoration opportunities within the 25,000-acre Great Marsh region on Massachusetts' North Shore. The Plan is designed to help communities in the region identify and restore degraded and former coastal wetland habitats.

"As a designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern, the Great Marsh is one of the Commonwealth's most environmentally significant coastal regions," Secretary Bowles said. "The Draft Plan released today – together with support from our Wetlands Restoration Program – will help Great Marsh communities plan and complete important coastal wetland restoration projects. These projects will restore healthy conditions to wetlands that have been damaged by historic development, and help improve the Great Marsh coastal ecosystem as a whole."

The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) published the Draft Restoration Plan as a web site that provides interactive maps, photographs, and narrative descriptions for both potential and previously completed wetland restoration projects in the Great Marsh. The web site will be updated and expanded over time to provide current information on the status and progress of restoration sites, and to incorporate new restoration opportunities as they emerge. Visit the web site to explore the Plan at: [http://www.mass.gov/czm/wrp/planning\\_pages/gmplan/home.htm](http://www.mass.gov/czm/wrp/planning_pages/gmplan/home.htm).

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The Draft Plan was produced by EOEAs Office of Coastal Zone Management – Wetlands Restoration Program (WRP) in collaboration with many other restoration partners. WRP is now seeking public input on the Plan. Comments received before April 28, 2007 will be addressed as the Final Plan is prepared. WRP will hold several informational meetings on the Draft Plan throughout the region during the comment period, and the Final Plan is expected to be completed early this summer.

For more information on the Draft Plan, contact Beth Suedmeyer at 617-626-4921 / [beth.suedmeyer@state.ma.us](mailto:beth.suedmeyer@state.ma.us).

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